



MI Civil Service News

M. SCOTT BOWEN DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF THE STATE EMPLOYER



We are pleased to introduce to you M. Scott Bowen, who was recently appointed by Governor Granholm to serve as the Director of the Office of the State Employer (OSE). As the State Employer, Mr. Bowen has responsibility for the oversight of all collective bargaining activities, labor-management relations, and health management programs for the State classified workforce.

Mr. Bowen is from Grand Rapids. He was a practicing attorney and served as Judge of the 62-A District Court in Wyoming until July 2005.

In addition to his judicial appointment, Mr. Bowen's previous government experience includes two terms on the Grand Rapids City Commission, serving as President in 1999. Mr. Bowen was also a Special Assistant Attorney General for Attorney General Frank Kelley, and an Assistant City Attorney for several West Michigan municipalities.

Mr. Bowen possesses a Juris Doctorate from the University of Detroit School of Law and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Michigan State University.

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*James D. Farrell,
Director*

*Our mission is to
provide innovative,
effective, and timely
HR consultation and
services to attract,
develop, and retain a
workforce that is
diverse, flexible,
creative, and compe-
tent to meet the ever-
changing needs of
state government.*

100% DEPENDENT BENEFIT AUDIT NEARS COMPLETION

We have reported to you in previous editions the status of the Dependent Benefit Audit. We are happy to inform you that the audit is near completion.

The Dependent Benefit Audit began in 2005 during the Open Enrollment process. Since that time, over 38,000 state employees who carry dependents on the State's insurance plans were asked to provide documentation substantiating their dependents' eligibility for coverage. The reason for the audit was simple, yet very important: The State of Michigan will spend over \$1 billion this year for benefits covering State employees, retirees, and their covered dependents. Therefore, it is important to review and monitor all dependents' coverage to be sure they are eligible for benefits.

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100% DEPENDENT BENEFIT AUDIT NEARS COMPLETION (continued)

The vast majority of you provided the documents necessary to continue your dependents' enrollment in the State's plans, and we are very appreciative of your cooperation. However, a small number of State employees did not respond to our numerous attempts to obtain the documentation required to validate their dependents' eligibility for coverage. These employees will be notified by certified mail that any undocumented dependents will be dropped from coverage as of April 8, 2007. Employees wishing to re-enroll dropped dependents may do so during the 2007 Open Enrollment period by providing proof of their dependents' eligibility for coverage.

We will continue to monitor additions and changes to employees' dependent coverage to ensure that only those individuals who are eligible for coverage are enrolled. If you have any questions regarding eligibility for benefits, please view the Department of Civil Service Web site, Employee Benefits Division, <http://www.michigan.gov/mdcs/0,1607,7-147-22854--,00.html> or contact the MI HR Service Center at 1-877-766-6447.

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLANS AND RATINGS

One of the State's most valuable tools for employees and managers is the annual performance rating system. The purpose of performance ratings is to provide meaningful, ongoing communication between managers and employees. Performance standards identify expected work accomplishments and competencies for employees and provide managers with a structured process with which to give employees feedback regarding their performance.

All employees should be apprised of their performance throughout the rating period, not just those whose performance is exceptionally good or needs improvement.

Performance ratings must be conducted annually for all employees. The importance of conducting ratings is reflected by the fact that all supervisory and managerial employees must have included in their performance management plan a factor or competency to timely and effectively conduct employee ratings.

Performance factors or objectives can be developed by the supervisor or jointly by the supervisor and employee. The objectives should briefly, but thoroughly, depict the expected outcome of the rating period. Competencies are used to measure how the objectives are accomplished. Examples of competencies include Adaptability, Building Trust, Customer Focus, and Developing a Successful Team. Competencies for all groups of classifications can be found on the DCS Web site, http://www.michigan.gov/mdcs/0,1607,7-147-6876_8056--,00.html.

Sometimes supervisors will ask employees to rate themselves on their performance. The value of this is to enable employees to objectively assess what they believe to be their strengths and weaknesses, and then have a meaningful discussion with their supervisor regarding what is going well and what could be improved. Supervisors must discuss employee ratings with their employees and issue an overall rating of "Meets Expectations," "Needs Improvement," or "Exceeds Expectations." To review the Civil Service Regulation governing employee ratings, visit the DCS Web site and click on "Rules and Regulations," "Regulations," "Chapter 2," Regulation 2.06, http://www.michigan.gov/documents/SPDOC_03-20a_69539_7.pdf.

FIRE SAFETY – THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

We all hope it will never happen to us or our loved ones – but the reality is home fires occur every day and lives are lost unnecessarily. We asked the State's expert, Fire Marshal Andy Neumann, to share with us information on fire safety that could keep our families safe in the event of a fire.

Nationally, 70 percent of home fire deaths result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms. If a home fire occurs, smoke alarms cut your chances of dying nearly in half.

In 2006, there were more than 11,500 reported home fires in Michigan, resulting in 144 deaths. Only 44 percent of the homes where a fire death occurred had smoke alarms present. More than half of those devices did not work, most often because of missing, dead, or disconnected batteries. Half of all home fire deaths in Michigan last year were caused by fires reported between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.



It is critical to install smoke alarms and test them once a month. Batteries should be replaced annually and if the smoke alarm is more than 10 years old, install a new one, even if it is a hard-wired alarm with a “long-life” (10-year) battery. Smoke detectors should be installed on every level of a home, including the basement and outside each separate sleeping area.

In addition to maintaining smoke alarms, it is vital that families develop a basic home fire escape plan so they know what to do when a smoke alarm sounds. Every plan should identify two ways out of every room and name an outside meeting place a safe distance from the home where everyone can meet. The drill should be practiced twice a year and be as realistic as possible.

A fire can spread through a home rapidly. In fact, there may be as little as two minutes to escape safely once the smoke alarm sounds. Fires are scary and confusing, especially to children. They can be loud, burn very fast, and their smoke can make a room or home very dark. An escape plan will help your family know how to react quickly and safely.



Think about what you would do if there was a fire in your home. The most important thing is to get out fast and do not take time to gather up your belongings. Stress to your children the importance of never hiding from a fire, but to get out of the house immediately.

Here are some important tips to assist you in developing your plan and responding to a real fire event:

1. Find two ways to get out of every room in your home. The first way out should be a door, if possible.
2. Identify a place for the family to meet outside and away from the house.
3. Be sure windows are not sealed from paint and can be opened easily.
4. Practice unlocking and opening windows with children.

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FIRE SAFETY – THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW (Continued)

5. Have a fire escape ladder available in every upper-floor bedroom.
6. Before opening any door in a fire, feel it first. If it is hot, there may be fire on the other side. Try to get out another way.
7. Stay low to the floor when escaping a fire. Because smoke rises, the air will be cleanest, coolest, and safest about 1 to 2 feet above the floor.
8. After you get out, call 9-1-1 or the fire department.
9. Stay outside no matter what. Do NOT go back for anything!

It is important to post the escape plan where family members will see it often and be reminded of how to safely escape from the home in case of fire.

Fire extinguishers can also be valuable to assist in putting out small fires or containing a small fire until help arrives. It is important that the extinguisher match the type of fire being fought (e.g., extinguishers containing water are not suitable for use on grease or electrical fires). Multipurpose fire extinguishers, labeled ABC, may be used on all three types of fire.

Extinguishers should be installed in plain view, above the reach of children, near an escape route, and away from stoves and heating appliances. They should be routinely inspected to ensure they are functioning properly. Most importantly, call 9-1-1 to report the fire before attempting to extinguish it on your own and make sure everyone has left the home. Only use an extinguisher when a fire is confined to a small area and is not spreading, and you have an unobstructed escape route to which the fire will not spread. Be sure to read and understand proper use of the extinguisher before a fire occurs.

COMMUTING TO LANSING? SIT BACK AND RELAX ON A MICHIVAN



One of our readers who is interested in increasing vanpoolers to commute from Jackson to Lansing asked that we share with you information on how you can reduce your travel costs, minimize stress, and lessen polluting the environment by reducing emissions.

Ride share with MichiVan offers economical rates and the companionship of riding with others to your work location rather than driving alone. In addition, vanpoolers are eligible to receive special federal tax incentives for vanpooling. Vanpools might be right for you if you travel 15 or more miles one-way to work and have a work schedule that is relatively consistent. Vanpools are comprised of a group of 7 to 15 people who share the costs of travel.

Traveling in a carpool might also be a way to reduce your travel costs. Carpools are comprised of a group of 2 to 6 people who commute together on a regular basis.

For more information regarding vanpooling and carpooling, visit MichiVan's Web site at:
<http://www.vpsiinc.com>.

EVENTS

Monday	May 28	Memorial Day
Wednesday	July 4	Independence Day
Monday	September 3	Labor Day
Monday	November 12	Veterans Day
Thursday, Friday	November 22, 23	Thanksgiving
Monday, Tuesday, Monday	December 24, 25, and 31	Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Eve

We Welcome Your Comments

Please contact us by e-mail at:

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Civil Service Commission

2007 Tentative Meetings

May 2

July 18

September 12

December 5

(meeting dates subject to change)

Think Spring....

